

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD**

Board Meeting

Hilton Camino Real Hotel  
El Paso, Texas  
June 5-6, 2002

Detailed Meeting Summary

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Board Meeting

Hilton Camino Real Hotel, El Paso, Texas

June 5-6, 2002

**Meeting Participants**

**Chair**

Diana Borja, Acting Chair, Director, Border Affairs (MC 121), Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission

**Board Members Present**

Larry Allen, Malpais Borderlands Group  
Karen Chapman, Texas Center for Policy Studies  
Gedi Cibas, New Mexico Environment Department  
Placido Dos Santos, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality  
William G. Fry, H-E-B Grocery Company  
Jennifer Kraus, Global Environmental Consulting Company  
Catherine Kulhman, Alternate Board Member  
Susan Kunz, Public Health and Organizational Development Consultant  
Jerry Paz, Molzen-Corbin & Associates, P.A.  
Ed Ranger, LexRadar, Inc.  
Diana Rose Mayor, City of Imperial Beach, California  
Nancy Sutley, EPA  
Rosendo Trevino, U.S. Department of Agriculture

**EPA Staff**

Geraldine Brown  
Elaine Koerner, Designated Federal Official for the Good Neighbor Board  
Lois Williams

**Speakers**

Elaine Barron, Joint Advisory Committee for Improvement of Air Quality in Paso del Norte Basin  
Dolores Briones, El Paso County Judge  
John Burkstaller, New Mexico/Texas Water Commission  
Diana Bustamante, Colonias Development Council  
Bobby Creel, New Mexico/Texas Water Commission  
Bob Curry, University of Texas at El Paso  
Joyce Fineburg, Mayor of El Paso Caballero's office  
Steve Harris, Alliance for El Grande Heritage

**Guests**

Emma Acosta, Solid Water Management, City of El Paso  
Raid Aldouri, University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Pan-American Center for Earth and Environmental Studies (PACES) program  
Lorenzo Arriaga, Bureau of Reclamation, Dept. of Interior  
Pat Banegas, former Board member  
Adele Cardenas de Malott, EPA, Region 6, Dallas  
Jorge Castillo, Border Affairs, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, El Paso Office  
Archie Clouse, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission  
Chris Cummings, City of El Paso  
Carlos Dominguez, S & B Infrastructure, Ltd.  
Martin Dominguez, Frank M. Tejada Center for Excellence  
Juan Garcia, El Paso County Health Department  
Rafael Guerrero, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Monica Hernandez, City of Juarez  
Angeles Herrera, EPA, Region 9, San Francisco  
Myron Knudsen, EPA, Region 6, Dallas  
Alvin Lam, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development  
Mike Landis, Bureau of Reclamation, El Paso Office  
Debra Little, U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission  
Debbie Livesay, Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians  
Nancy Lowery, San Diego State University  
Fernando Macias, Border Environment Cooperation Commission  
Steve Niemeyer, TNRCC, Office of Border Affairs, Austin  
Edgar Olivas, Constituent Representative of Sen. Jeffrey M. Jones, Senado de la Republica Estados Unidos Mexicanos  
Luz Parris-Sweetland, USDA Forest Service, Washington DC  
Salvador Payan, of U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes' Office, 16<sup>th</sup> District of Texas  
Antonio Rascon, International Boundary and Water Commission, Mexico  
Carlos Rincon, Environmental Defense  
Cecilia Rodriguez, Rio Grande Basin Coalition, El Paso Office  
Diane Ross, Mayor of Imperial Beach, California  
Luis Carlos Salmeron, City of Juárez  
Darrin Swartz-Larson, EPA, El Paso Border Office  
Gabriela Van Ochoa, Rio Bravo Coalition  
Gia Weber, EPA, Region 6, Dallas

**Others Present**

Ignacio Barrientos, International Translation Services  
Carlos Nagel, International Translation Services  
Representatives of the Press: Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 26, El Diario, KFOX Television, Televiso Juarez, University of Texas at El Paso newspaper.

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD**

Board Meeting  
Hilton Camino Real Hotel, El Paso, Texas

**Detailed Meeting Summary, June 5, 2002**

**Introduction**

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board (the Board) is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) independent advisory committee. It advises the U.S. President and Congress on good neighbor practices along the U.S.-Mexico border. The focus is on the environmental infrastructure needs of the ten U.S. states that are contiguous to Mexico.

**Meeting Focus**

The theme for the meeting was "Innovative Partnerships."

**Greetings and Welcoming Remarks**

*Acting Chair, Diana Borja*, welcomed those present. The next Good Neighbor meeting will be held October 9 and 10 in Nogales, Arizona.

*Joyce Fineburg, representative of Mayor of El Paso Caballero's office*, welcomed everyone.

*Dolores Briones, El Paso County Judge*, welcomed the group. The area faces serious environmental challenges. She has advocated bringing water and infrastructure to the colonias since the early 1980s.

*Salvador Payan, representative of U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes' office*, welcomed those present. He asked the audience to contact the Congressman's office for any assistance they might need.

Ms. Borja asked those present to introduce themselves, and this was done.

**Presentations**

***Community Organization and the Characteristics and Examples of Cross-border Projects***  
***Bob Currey, Assistant Director for the Center for Environmental Resource Management, at the University of Texas at El Paso.***

Overview:

Mr. Currey gave an overview of principles of community organization, based upon a book called *Principles of Community Engagement* that is published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

- a) There are four different levels of partnerships for cross-border projects. These are: community-based, community-to-community, those between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and government-to-government.
- b) It is imperative to have a clear understanding of purpose and goals before beginning a community engagement process. Organizers must be knowledgeable about the specific community, and then must establish relationships and build trust. The result of a project should be community self-determination.

### Cross-Border Partnerships

- a) The foremost need in cross-border partnerships is communication. Along the border fluency in Spanish is imperative for work at a community level. The long traffic waits (90 minutes to two hours) to cross into the U.S. from Mexico are a barrier. The available level of technology is disparate between the two countries.
- b) The U.S. university community is far behind Mexico in bilingual fluency, and needs to catch up. There is an imbalance between credentials (faculty in Mexico may have less advanced terminal degrees), and an imbalance in administrative support (U.S. faculty have more robust operational support.)

### Examples of successful projects:

Mr. Currey talked about the Agua Para Beber cross-border project, which teaches communities how to disinfect and protect drinking water. A community-university partnership is the El Paso environmental justice project funded by the EPA. One university-to-university project is an evaluation of composting latrines. A current U.S.-Mexico university project is an environmental health risk assessment.

### Conclusion:

Mr. Currey reiterated the importance of face-to-face contact as a means to build capacity within a community. Short-term tangible successes help strengthen longer-term commitment. Mr. Currey said that there is a necessary period of socialization in organization efforts. Potential partners need some time to become comfortable with one another before meaningful work can begin.

### Questions:

*Ms. Koerner:* to what extent can this approach be applied border-wide, and to what extent should it be tailored to specific communities?

*Mr. Currey:* there are sometimes cultural differences between different communities, and there are also logistical differences (such as travel time) in others.

*Mr. Paz:* how should groups cope with changes in personnel?

*Mr. Currey:* frequently the same people will stay involved, but will change internal positions or go to different organizations. These changes are a fact of life in long-term effort.

### ***Report on New Mexico/Texas Water Commission***

#### ***John Burkstaller and Bobby Creel of the New Mexico/Texas Water Commission***

### Background:

*Mr. Burkstaller:* the Commission was formed as a means to settle ongoing legal battles. A Supreme Court decision established that the City of El Paso had the right to import water from New Mexico across state lines. The Court also deemed that the State of New Mexico had the right to attach conditions to that export. This decision led to a stalemate. In 1991 an agreement established a mutual study of surface, municipal, and industrial water supply development, as well as studying the conversion of some agricultural water to municipal and industrial use.

### Current and Future Conditions:

There is a very high projected demand for Dona Ana County, El Paso, and Juarez through the year 2030. One short-term solution is a desalinization plant that is projected to be on line in 2005. In about 2025 there will not be any potable water left in the aquifer of the Hueco Basin.

The Mesilla Bolson, which is the site of the aquifer that supplies the cities of Dona Ana County and the City of El Paso is not as depleted, but those cities that are vulnerable in New Mexico know that they must convert from aquifer use to Rio Grande surface water use.

The Commission has devised a series of surface water projects that have received a positive environmental impact assessment (February 2001). Four new water plants have been proposed and two existing plants would be expanded: then the Hueco Basin would then be used only when there is not a surface water supply. Using these plants may give the Hueco Basin an indefinite lifetime.

A current obstacle is that the Commission is having difficulty converting water from the irrigation district, and for that reason construction of the El Paso plants is delayed. The New Mexico plants are delayed because currently there is adequate groundwater.

#### Paso del Norte Water Taskforce Project:

*Dr. Creel:* one of the constraints upon planning was the absence of geologic maps that map both the U.S. and Mexico sides of the region. The Hewlett Foundation funded a cooperative mapping program of three universities. The information is now complete, and is available on the participating entities' Websites and on CD ROM.

#### Questions:

*Mr. Dos Santos:* will the projected depletion of the Hueco Basin result in significant land subsidence and aquifer compaction?

*Mr. Burkstaller:* it has not caused any notable damage, because earlier there had already been huge withdrawals. There has not been a negative economic impact.

*Ms. Chapman:* is the difficulty in getting surface water rights or ground water rights?

*Mr. Burkstaller:* in the case of obtaining water from New Mexico, the State engineer has the right to attach any condition to export. There are disagreements with the local irrigation district.

*Mr. Harris:* is an assumption being made about outflows from this region in the environmental decision?

*Mr. Burkstaller:* If all the surface water plans and plants were implemented it would actually increase the water flow and water carrying salt slightly.

*Ms. Cibas:* what are the major difficulties found and the most important solutions to those difficulties found during this data collection?

*Dr. Creel:* there are differences in scale and protocol between different agencies.

*Mr. Burkstaller:* the agencies involved still have a tendency to want to keep their own data confidential. Part of the process is to improve all of the participants' confidence that the data will be used wisely.

*Jerry Paz:* what are the benefits of this binational committee working together?

*Dr. Creel:* the local parties in New Mexico have benefitted considerably.

#### ***Overview of Air Quality in Paso del Norte Basin***

*Elaine Barron, Joint Advisory Committee for Improvement of Air Quality in Ciudad Juarez, El Paso, Texas, and Dona Ana County, New Mexico*

#### Overview:

Dr. Barron was appointed to the Texas Air Quality Control Board in 1993. What made this particular area's problems unique is the common airshed. There are similar environmental problems and economic similarities in Tucson and Nogales. Improvements have come with a community-based, bottom-up approach with the help of officials.

Comment:

*Ms. Ross* congratulated Dr. Barron for her passion and enthusiasm.

*Ms. Koerner* introduced two of the EPA staff, Lois Williams and Geraldine Brown, and then a brief recess was taken.

***Overview - Waste Tires as a Binational Issue***

*Jorge Castillo, Border Affairs, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, El Paso Office, Luis Carlos Salmeron, City of Juarez, Edgar Olivas, from the Office of Sen. Jeffrey M. Jones, State of Chihuahua, Mexico*

Statement of the Problem:

*Mr. Castillo* said that in the Border area there is an active market in selling and trading of used tires. Tires that leave El Paso intended as a waste stream reappear on the market on the Mexican side; waste tires also come in from other neighboring U.S. states. Some of the community issues associated with the tires are: illegal dumping, unauthorized storage, vector control challenges and clandestine importation of waste tires.

*Mr. Salmeron* said that communicable diseases like encephalitis and dengue are bred through the mosquitoes that reproduce in the discarded tires. There is both an image and health endangerment with garbage pileups: cockroaches, rats, spiders, and the potential for fire that causes air and ground pollution.

For the past two years Juarez has worked with Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) for a project certification. The final disposition has to involve grinding the tires up. They can't be successfully buried whole in a landfill, they will float up to the top.

*Mr. Castillo:* on the El Paso side tires can be put into a landfill if they are quartered or shredded, but not whole tires. The State of Texas had a disposition program that ended in 1997, so it is up to local communities to handle the tire disposal problem. In El Paso there is also a huge county problem that the city can't handle, so a number of groups are involved.

Senador Jeffrey Jones of Chihuahua and Senator Elliot Shapleigh of El Paso sponsored a binational meeting on this problem last October. (Mr. Castillo then submitted a letter from Sen. Shapleigh for the record.)

*Mr. Olivas:* from the perspective of the City of Juárez, the key elements for a solution are: generate a binational program for handling used tires, improve handling used tires and implement the BECC project within the year. We must work on sustainable means and continue with tire collection programs. (Mr. Olivas then submitted a letter from Sen. Jones for the record.)

Conclusion

*Mr. Castillo:* This is not just an El Paso problem, it happens everywhere from San Diego to Brownsville. We are also working with different states in Mexico to collect information. There are about 11 million waste tires that are not properly disposed. We encourage you to contact the



Southwest Center for Environmental Policy and ask for their help.

Questions and Comments:

*Mr. Dos Santos:* a business called SEMEX recently approached the Arizona/Mexico Commission about fueling a cement plant in Sonora by burning waste tires.

*Mr. Salmeron:* right now we have to solve the problem at the lowest cost, approach local cement companies in Sonora that might be cheaper. Infrastructure also has to be prepared. I would be quite cautious with the project in Sonora.

*Ms. Kuhlman:* we are working with the California EPA on the same issue. Do you have any opinions on what some of the barriers are (and how to remove them) to recycling?

*Mr. Castillo:* right now the biggest challenge is the market available for recycling.

*Ms. Chapman:* is there an issue with burning tires and an adverse impact upon air quality?

*Mr. Salmeron:* we don't have a problem with air quality. The cement companies are using cutting edge technology.

*Mr. Castillo:* Texas generates 24 million waste tires annually; 50% of that goes to tire-derived fuel projects, and the bulk of those are cement plants.

*Mr. Knudson* said that brush fires started by shredded tires become very large, so large that local fire departments cannot put them out and the Federal government must be called in. There are also real mechanical problems with shredders. Mr. Knudson encouraged consideration of chopping as an alternative method.

Mr. Knudson continued, the EPA does not see problems in states that have a tax to pay for disposal at the plants. Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma do not have disposal problems because waste tires go to pulp, paper, and cement plants as fuel.

*Ms. Rose:* In the San Diego/Tijuana region the tires are reused as slope stabilization and building foundations.

***Overview - Colonias Development Council***

*Diane Bustamante*

Overview:

*Ms. Bustamante:* The Women's Cultural Center in Anthony, New Mexico is being built now with tires. The Colonias Development Council (begun by the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, Office of Catholic Social Ministries) has been in operation for 12 years. We do community development, organizing, and economic development.

We have three assumptions:

- a) People are acutely aware of their means and resources,
- b) Given opportunity people can take positive actions to improve conditions in their lives, and
- c) By building communities people can become empowered to overcome obstacles that would otherwise be insurmountable.

We deal with environmental issues on a daily basis. Colonias are illegal subdivisions that are for the most part found in flood plains, and receive the refuse of other habitations in any flooding situation.

Right now we are working with Dia del Sol and Anthony Water and Sanitation District to bring in natural gas to three communities in the southern part of the county. We provide technical assistance and organizational support to groups wanting to start small businesses. We provide organization support for the Chaparral Community Health Council in opposing construction of a landfill 500 feet away from the nearest residence.

#### Questions:

*Ms. Koerner:* how did you begin work with the seven colonias? Did they come to you?

*Ms. Bustamente:* The first two communities included our organizers (as residents). Today the organizations come to us, and we have an evaluation process.

*Mr. Paz:* you (the organization) are no longer with the Church? Your funding comes from what source?

*Ms. Bustamente:* we are a 501(c) (3) [a tax status designation for not-for-profit corporations] and autonomous since 1996. Most funding comes from private foundations and donors.

*Mr. Paz:* What kind of advice could you give this board for working with colonias along the Border?

*Ms. Bustamente:* (1) Perhaps some of the government entities could develop a popular education piece and partner with other nonprofit organizations in a systematic way. (2) The EPA could establish a standard so there wouldn't be so many tires with limited use and (3) look at truly sustainable types of energy use, and (4) support initiatives that help people be not so dependent on nonrenewable energy, look at alternative modes of housing that are more energy efficient, for example.

#### Comments:

*Mr. Lam:* I am here to show HUD's willingness and interest to work with this group. We are beginning to work closely with two Mexican government commissions, the Ministry of Social Development and the National Housing Commission. We are working on training officials in local communities on both sides of the border, and supporting Hispanic colleges.

*Ms. Acosta:* because we are a Border community we face many unique challenges: over a million vehicles cross our bridge on a monthly basis. We have found a great deal of help from community involvement.

*Ms. Sweetland:* the Forest Service works with national forest systems, and state and local groups. There is a conservation education program promotion of sustainable development. The Texas Forest Service is studying what kinds of desert trees can be used in areas where lack of water is an issue. Work is continuing on opening a Forest Service office in El Paso, Texas.

The meeting was then recessed until 2:00 pm of the same day, Wednesday June 5th, 2002.

#### *Overview of the Binational Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Ecosystem Workgroup (BREW) Lorenzo Arriaga and Mike Landis of the Bureau of Reclamation*

#### Overview:

*Mr. Arriaga:* BREW is a binational water and natural resource information network for the collection, maintenance, distribution of information and data for the lower Rio Grande and Rio Bravo. The objective is to obtain findings that will protect the ecological integrity of the Rio Grande and Rio Bravo between Fort Quitman and Amistad. Current studies are being conducted of contaminants of biota and

invertebrates in the Big Bend region, of peregrine falcon nests in the Big Bend National Park, and a survey of in-stream and riparian zone natural resource and ambient water quality conditions. Findings are kept in a standardized watershed database.

#### Aquatic weeds:

One of the biggest problems for the Rio Grande is the invasive species of aquatic weeds; the greatest impact is in the Lower Rio Grande Valley below Falcon Reservoir. The weeds are hydrilla and the hyacinth broad leaf floating plant. They take up and consume tremendous amounts of water: up to six times more evaporative transpiration loss than if the water had nothing floating in it. Operation costs of pumping stations skyrocket when the hyacinth is unchecked. Mechanical harvesting is not an effective control. One very effective means of control is the grass carp. There is also a fly that will control hydrilla.

#### Salt cedar:

*Mr. Landis:* salt cedar is very hard to get rid of, has no commercial use, and harbors ticks that infest deer and dogs. On the Mexican side of the river they have been very reluctant to use herbicides, especially because of the potential for goats to graze off of poisoned trees. There is a pilot program in the Pecos River in the U.S.: a 110-mile section was sprayed with Arsenal. There is an ongoing study of the effects, but apparently some of the salt cedar is coming back again two years later. We should pick our battles and eliminate 10 to 20 percent in the right (strategic) places. This would help increase bird populations. The latest and great hope for battling salt cedar is a beetle called the *Diorhabda Elongata*.

#### Questions:

*Mr. Trevino:* has the water quality of the Pecos improved in the area where salt cedar was removed?

*Mr. Landis:* the Pecos is a salt river. As far as I know there has not been any change in quantity and quality.

*Ms. Koerner:* have you studied the relationship of the beetle with the ecosystem, what its natural predators are, and so on?

*Mr. Landis:* in studies here, if the salt cedar trees are eliminated the beetles die. If you release the beetles on a forest of salt cedar, you won't see the forest go away

*Mr. Dos Santos:* are there any estimates of how much water these invasive species are taking up along the river?

*Mr. Landis:* the best estimate that I have seen is 70 million acre feet in the western United States, about as much as Lake Mead and Lake Powell put together.

*Mr. Paz:* how effective has water hyacinth and other weed removal been?

*Mr. Arriaga:* They are mainly research projects at this time. The most promising form of removal from a binational point of view seems to be biological control.

*Mr. Landis:* A couple of years ago the Bureau of Reclamation sent a harvester down to the Lower Rio Grande to remove hyacinth. After a three-day hiatus over a quarter a mile had already overgrown. In some places in the river so much dust has blown over the hyacinth that it has actually become land and you can walk across these canals: it is no longer a river at all.

*Ms. Borja:* there are terrible drought conditions (low water) in addition to water hyacinths and the

other invasive species. To get water to the cities below these points, you have to send what they call push-water. The amount needed to push through the weeds isn't calculable: this could endanger the water availability to the municipalities.

*Ms. Rose:* can you explain to me what the detrimental effects of the salt cedar plants are?

*Mr. Arriaga:* it is a water-consuming plant with almost no beneficial value. Researchers will tell you that an acre feet of salt cedar infested land will consume up to five acre feet of water per year. It is a monoculture. Once it takes over nothing else will grow, and it's very hard to control.

*Mr. Landis:* the salt cedar is one of the few land plants that will take sodium up. The needles fall off and deposit salt into the ground: none of the other native species can then take hold in the soil.

*Mr. Harris:* in a 30-mile reach of the Rio Grande, around San Marcial, New Mexico, the water budget estimate is that the salt cedar forest consumes about 100,000 acre-feet a year, or about a quarter of the Rio Grande's water supply.

*Mr. Trevino:* the other problem with the salt cedar is that it exudes the salts, and the soil disperses it. It compromises the turbidity of the water as it comes across.

### ***Overview – the Importance of the Rio Grande***

*Pablo Dominguez, SEMARNAT*

#### Background:

*Mr. Dominguez:* the Rio Grande and its different branches are the basis for the most important part of life of the Chihuahua Desert. Human activities have adversely affected native vegetation, reduced wetlands, and loss of habitat. Some of the activities that may help us recover some of the ecosystem are: removal of nonnative vegetation binationally, reintroduction of native species, and removing exotic species, and protection and better use of domestic water. There are six protected areas on the river, four on the U.S. side and two in Mexico.

### ***Formation of a Nongovernmental Organization called The Alliance***

*Steve Harris, Rio Grande Heritage*

#### Background:

*Mr. Harris:* we have learned that a confrontational approach, while it may provide some gains through lawsuits, does not solve the problem of the decline and collapse of the ecology of the river. We are taking more of sustainability, outreach and organizing approach. It will take several generations to solve the problems of the Rio Grande.

Among our goals is to achieve public support for a new water ethic, a new way of looking at water. Another is to try and change protective policy. We are involved in projects working on salt cedar eradication and native revegetation.

#### Conclusion:

The Alliance is expanding to projects that address the entire upper basin, promoting an ecosystem approach, and partnering with groups in the border region.

#### Questions

*Mr. Fry:* if you could have one wish granted by the Federal government, what would it be?

*Mr. Harris:* to first protect the water. After that you have food production, and then if there is water left, you begin industrial processes.

Mr. Paz: the competing interests for water are so significant, and it does seem to boil down to money. How do you propose to work in that kind of structure?

Mr. Harris: that would be my second wish. If the federal government bought water rights the efficiencies of the irrigation systems could be modified.

### ***EPA Region 6 Activities Report***

*Myron Knudsen and Gina Weber, Region 6 EPA*

#### Background:

Mr. Knudsen: since 1983 the Superfund program has screened sites according to its program criteria. The Brownsfield program began as an experiment, to fund those programs that didn't qualify. This past year the funding was 98 million and starting October 1st there will be a Congressional mandate. Since you are recommending certain actions to the Federal government, you might want to suggest that BECC and NAD Bank take on remediation of sites.

#### Other programs:

Ms. Weber: One project at Big Bend National Park is called Big Bend Regional Air Visibility Observational Study (BRAVO). This project took samplings across portions of Texas and portions of Mexico to learn what was causing the increased pollution.

Another is our pesticides program (specifically, methyl parathion). One of the successes has been to provide information on this in outreach and education campaigns. Another recent success is the development of a video called "Three Friends to the Rescue". We are looking for partners outside the Federal government to distribute it.

### ***Report on Activities in EPA Region 9***

*Catherine Kuhlman, EPA Region 9*

#### Border 21 Plans:

Ms. Kuhlman: Secretary Lichtinger from SEMARNAT and EPA Administrator Whitman have committed their organizations to developing a new draft for the next Border 21 plan by December of this year. We hope to have a document ready for public review by late summer. We want to get informal feedback from groups like the Good Neighbor Board and other stakeholders. [Ms. Kuhlman then submitted a draft schedule.]

#### Questions:

Ms. Chapman: how does EPA develop the public input process?

Ms. Kuhlman said that the states have been involved, and that U.S. Tribes would see the materials presented at the Board meeting.

Mr. Dos Santos: we collaborated on the development of this strategy.

Mr. Guerrero: do our strategies include some of the other federal agencies with vested interests on the border?

Ms. Kuhlman: not in the plan itself.

Mr. Swartz Larson: we plan to brief the Border Caucus.

### ***Good Neighbor Board Member Report-Outs***

Mr. Trevino: I have brought copies of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 authorizes all USDA uses. It is one of the most significant pieces of legislation in regard to agriculture in many years.

It is going to provide financial assistance perhaps as great as 75 percent of the cost of irrigation water management programs. It also has a component that assists private landowners in restoration of the habitat taken over by salt cedar, riparian enhancement, and financial assistance for new producers to use for conservation activities

Another new initiative is the Southwest Border Economic Development Initiative led by Asst. Secretary of Agriculture Lou Gallagos.

*Mr. Cibas:* we are holding meetings in more isolated areas. In the latest public meetings in New Mexico we emphasized geothermal aspects and groundwater aquifer related matters. We inaugurated a project in the Poncho Villa State Park on water harvesting. We have also begun initial conversations in Mexico.

*Ms. Rose:* I have a handout to give you on the COBAR program. I also brought a call to action (policy) from Imperial Beach on water quality issues. It addresses interim measures to deal with the discharge from the international sewage plant. The other component is the need for rehabilitation and repairs to the infrastructure in Tijuana.

*Mr. Dos Santos:* I brought a report on the Arizona/Mexico Commission Conference. Conclusions were: (1) to have a waste tires feasibility analysis, (2) to expand regionally an Arizona project (Intel funds an education program that updates computers and then gives them to schools), and (3) for the states of Sonora and Arizona to build more capacity in wildlife management.

The Commission also commended a binational effort that put out a large fire in a very brief period. I will now present two of the certificates of commendation to members of the board here: the International Boundary and Water Commission, and the EPA. The two governors issued a joint declaration about the environment, marking the month of October 2002 Clean Water Month for the Border region.

*Mr. Frey:* the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 5; it provides funds to help companies convert to alternate fuel. From our point of view (a grocery company in Texas and Mexico) it is effective. We converted some of our trucks that operate in Houston to run on natural gas instead of diesel, and then got more money from the Houston/Galveston Area Commission.

I am part of a group that the Legislature asked to study how Texas can become the center of fuel cell development. Fuel cells operate at very high efficiencies, as high as 70 to 80 percent in converting fuel to electricity. It is a hopeful technology, and we will report to the next session of the Legislature.

*Ms. Little:* I'm with the U.S. section of the International Boundary and Water Commission. The report on an immediate water delivery plan for the Rio Grande is on our Website. A report on the 2001 Colorado River Delta Symposium will be posted early next month. At that time we will also determine the next round of activities for the implementation of the IBWC Minute Agreement 306.

We are seeking a partnership for a comprehensive U.S./Mexico groundwater study. We have a partnership with the State of Texas for the Texas Clean Rivers Program. Studies and projects underway include the Rio Grande canalization project upstream of El Paso, the lower Rio Grande flood control project in South Texas, the Colorado River Conveyance and Preservation Project, and expanding citizens' forums into Arizona.

*Ms. Borja:* the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission is changing its name to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. We have just completed a “State of the Environment” assessment for the Rio Grande and the entire Texas border region.

*Mr. Arriaga:* I brought two handouts, one is a newspaper article on the drought in the upper Rio Grande basin in New Mexico, and the other is a cultural resources assessment. Reservoir levels in the upper Rio Grande basin are approaching historic lows. We at the Bureau of Reclamation will continue to implement water conservation programs in partnership with other state and Federal agencies. The USGS is trying to secure funding for the IBWC groundwater initiative. Aerial electromagnetic technology is a promising new method of aerial survey that may save costs of water level surveys.

*Mr. Ranger:* we recently had a meeting in La Jolla, California, with the major international energy generators about strategy for the Border. We are in the process of organizing a Western Water Basin conference to be held in Phoenix.

The Mexican House of Deputies just passed a soil contamination law, and this will be significant. It is now in the Senate. This has implications for Brownsville.

*Ms. Kraus:* we offer a series of workshops on pollution prevention and the Environmental Management System toolbox.

We are putting together a case study program. A company in San Diego allowed us to film all of their industrial and operations processes. This will be used to help maquiladoras and other organizations on the Mexican side of the Border develop and implement similar procedures.

Last week I briefed visitors from Mexico, Central and South America on the Good Neighbor Board activities. The American Association of Port Authorities has some good information on best management practices that could be used binationally. The Sustainable Industries partnership Programs have good environmental management system implementation guides.

*Mr. Allen:* the Malpais Borderlands Group does a series of VIP tours. I just finished this last weekend our annual ranchers workshop, Ms. Koerner was there for part of it.

*Ms. Kuhlman:* we did a small pilot project aimed at reducing the digital divide between the U.S. and Mexico.

*Ms. Chapman:* we are working with a number of nonprofit agencies in Texas on water issues and the water planning process. Encouraging work has been done collaborating with Mexican nonprofit organizations in the Rio Conchas Basin.

I also have comments to relay from Andrea Abel on BECC and NAD Bank progress. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> the House Committee on Financial Service, Subcommittee on International Monetary Policy and Trade, held a hearing on World Bank loans in this area. She suggests that the Good Neighbor Board try to bring more attention to this on the Hill.

*Ms. Sutley:* last week the Mexican Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Education for Baja,

California, and our Secretary of Education signed an agreement on cooperation in environmental education.

After concluding thanks and remarks the meeting recessed at 5:20 p.m.

## **Meeting Summary - June 6, 2002**

### **Opening Remarks and Business Meeting**

After *Acting Chair Borja* opened the meeting *EPA Designated Federal Officer Elaine Koerner* made announcements: she welcomed new members, thanked retiring ones for their service, observed personal milestones, and thanked the meeting planning committee for their work.

*Ms. Borja* asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes to either of the previous meetings. Several corrections in spelling or other errors were made.

### **2002 Road Map**

*Ms. Koerner* asked if the Board was ready to come to a consensus on the Road Map. *Ms. Chapman* asked if this Road Map was intended to be just for internal use, and *Ms. Koerner* replied that it was primarily an internal document.

*Mr. Fry* had not attended the previous meeting. He asked what was meant in a statement in the draft that referred to holding federal officials accountable. *Mr. Ranger* answered that the first intent was to point out that many federal officials are missing board meetings, and that they should be accountable for their absence. Secondly, the Board wants to know what these federal officials are doing, to have access to that information.

*Ms. Koerner* said that after the Calexico meeting she did meet with some of the federal member representatives and emphasized the importance of their presence

The Board then came to a consensus and accepted the Road Map.

### **Sixth Letter Outline Discussion**

*Ms. Koerner* made suggestions about the organization of the letter. *Ms. Sutley* suggested that the Board not reiterate earlier recommendations on water and energy, but just add any new recommendations. Further discussion ensued about what material (background or new or a combination) is best to include in the letter.

### **Work Plan Grid**

*Ms. Koerner* said that the following members volunteered to work on topics for the letter: Dennis Linskey in border region policy, John Klein for water, Placido dos Santos for air and energy, and Ed Ranger for hazardous materials. Susan Kunz, Jerry Paz, Ed Ranger, and Bob Ybarra also indicated an interest.

*Ms. Kunz* clarified a reference to an earlier letter, and reminded the Board that assessment of watersheds could be included in the current work.

*Ms. Robe* brought up the topic of agencies' reports on the progress of Board recommendations. *Ms. Koerner* said that sometimes boards are effective, but in subtler ways than adoption of policy. Discussion



continued among Board members about other methods of effectiveness.

*Ms. Chapman* said that one measure of effectiveness is to track the readers of reports, or references to the reports in other media. She said that *Ms. Koerner* was the obvious choice to track that information. She also suggested producing fact sheets to inform Members of Congress. *Ms. Borja* said other indicators of effectiveness are comment letters, or other institutions wanting to use the Good Neighbor meetings as a forum.

*Mr. Ranger* observed that the primary job of the Board is to notify the President of the United States of what is happening on the border. *Mr. Dos Santos* pointed out in the longer term more of the Board's recommendations have been realized. *Mr. Allen* concurred.

*Ms. Kunz* volunteered to capture the six to eight phrases from the discussion that best address a primary measure of the Board's effectiveness.

*Ms. Koerner* proposed a schedule for developing background information on conservation and health as issues. *Ms. Borja* and *Ms. Chapman* volunteered for the water work group. *Ms. Sutley* and *Ms. Cibas* will be on the energy work group. *Ms. Rose* volunteered for the innovative partnerships work group, *Mr. Paz* and *Ms. Coronado* were assigned as well. The health work group will include *Mr. Trevino*, *Ms. Kimpel*, *Mr. Guzman*, and *Mr. Walling*. *Mr. Allen*, *Mr. Phillips*, *Ms. Chapman*, and *Mr. Trevino* will be on the conservation work group. *Mr. Dos Santos*, *Ms. Cibas*, and *Ms. Kuhlman* will be on the binational border plan. Security and environmental infrastructure will be *Ms. Kuhlman*, *Mr. Ranger*, and *Mr. Trevino*. *Ms. Coronado* was tentatively assigned to a special topic of dialogue with CONSEJO.

Dates were then set for the various task groups to meet. June 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. Eastern time for the water work group, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. Eastern time for the energy work group, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 Eastern time for the innovative partnership group, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. Eastern time for the conservation work group, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. for the border plan (special topics) group, and June 27<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. for the security and environmental infrastructure group.

*Ms. Koerner* thanked *Jerry Paz* for taking the lead writing position on the BECC/NAD Bank letter. *Irasema Coronado* continues to take the Board lead on CONSEJO. *Jennifer Kraus* and *Diane Rose* have put together an excellent PowerPoint presentation.

A brief recess was taken at 9:45 a.m. *Acting Chair Diana Borja* reconvened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

*Ms. Koerner* said that she is working on updating the Website, but that resources are very limited.

*Ms. Kraus* asked if there was any assistance that Board members could offer. She said that 99 percent of the time when someone asks her about the work of the Board they ask if information can be obtained from the website. She asked if some of the excellent PowerPoint presentations from previous meeting presentations could be posted on the website.

*Ms. Chapman* said she would write a letter requesting that more attention be given to website maintenance. She recommended that a counter be put on the site.

*Mr. Ranger* said that the technology team of his business (LexRadar, Inc.) analyzed the Good Neighbor website and offered to design an improved site for the EPA. The offer was declined. *Mr. Ranger's*

understanding is that the public site is a very low priority.

*Ms. Kuhlman* asked *Ms. Koerner* to investigate whether or not one of the regional offices might have more capacity than the EPA headquarters server. *Ms. Weber* said she believed EPA Region 6 could offer assistance. *Mr. Sutley* said that he had checked the site and that the agenda for the present meeting had not been posted. *Mr. Sutley* observed that his own large organization does manage to post updated materials.

*Mr. Sutley* asked the EPA appoint a representative from the Department of Energy to sit on the Board, since so much attention is being paid to energy.

*Ms. Koerner* said that she appreciated the Board's patience and would continue to seek solutions and improvements for the website.

### **Board Membership and the Appointment Process**

*Ms. Koerner* reported that the Department of Housing and Urban Development would soon send a representative to rejoin the Board.

*Ms. Rose* asked what the process of selection is for obtaining new Board members. *Ms. Koerner* answered that federal members are appointed by their agency heads. Non-federal members are appointed by the head of the EPA. By-laws require a state government representative from each of the four Border States, as well as representatives from other sectors in those states. *Ms. Koerner* maintains a pool of potential member resumes.

*Ms. Chapman*, *Ms. Sutley*, and *Mr. Ranger* all have terms that officially expired last month. The membership package has gone to Governor Whitman's office and there should soon be a decision on reappointments. Until that decision is known they should consider themselves still active members.

The Board then turned to the topic of appointment of a new Chair. *Ms. Koerner* said the EPA is working on appointment, it may come either from within the existing Board or of someone new. In response to questions *Ms. Koerner* reported that Gov. Whitman makes the appointment decision, and that the Chair need not come from any particular sector. *Ms. Rose* expressed concern that the new appointment might be someone from outside the existing Board. Discussion ensued. *Mr. Ranger* asked if the Board participates in the recommendations to Governor Whitman, and asked if the Board might see the resumes or applications that have been made. *Ms. Koerner* replied that Board members do not participate in selection, but may see either resumes or applications.

*Mr. Trevino* observed that advisory boards work at the pleasure of the Administration, and that changes are likely to be made with any transition in office. *Ms. Sutley* reminded the committee that they do not serve the EPA, but advise the President and Congress. Discussion continued, focusing on the fact that five present Board members might be eligible to be appointed chair. After a brief period off the record the Board's attention turned to the Fifth Report.

### **Fifth Report**

*Ms. Koerner* said she was working on obtaining a response to the Board on their Report.

### **Border 21 Plan**

*Ms. Kunz* suggested that the Board plan to comment on the new border plan based on the time line presented by *Ms. Kuhlman*. The 30-day comment period will have passed before the Board meets again. *Chair Borja* said that the Committee could not respond to the plan because it is not public. *Mr. Swartz-Larson* said that suggestions on outreach would be welcome. *Ms. Kunz* suggested that the Board (1) identify one or two people to be prepared to lead a response, (2) that the dialogue with the tribes be equal to the outreach extended to the states, and (3) that any letter of comment be timely.

#### **BECC and NAD Bank**

*Ms. Chapman* agreed to draft a letter about public input and the Board's desire to be involved. Fact sheets will be a part of this suggestion.

#### **Nogales Meeting**

*Ms. Koerner* said the themes for the Nogales meeting will be health and conservation, including presentations on homeland security. *Ms. Kunz* asked that an effort be made to include Tribal governments in the Nogales meeting.

*Acting Chair Borja* said the CONSEJO meeting would be reported via e-mail. After concluding thanks the meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.